



SPARK GAP

Vol. 40, Issue 3, March 2023 *MARC - Serving Central Indiana Communities*



NEW HOPE CHURCH

Our March MARC monthly meeting is 8am this Saturday 3/18 at **New Hope Church**, 5307 W. Fairview Rd. Greenwood, IN 46142. We will be back at the JC REMC building the rest of the year. We are in the Activity Center in the **Lower Level** across from the Gym. Enter the West facing lower level door by the Flagpole.

Please pre-register on the club website www.midstatehams.org if you are Amateur Radio license testing.

We now have a map of all the emergency warning siren locations in Johnson County. It is linked to the club website www.midstatehams.org so login and download if you wish.

Storm Spotter Training will be held in-person at the Johnson County Sheriff's Department Training Center, 1091 Hospital Rd Franklin, IN 46132 on Thursday, April 13 at 7pm. There is no charge for training.

Hope to see you at the meeting Saturday!

73,
Tim WC9G



MARCH 2023 BIRTHDAYS

*N9LC – Steve Brown
KB9LOT – David Daily
W9NMM – Noel Mortier
KC9WLR – Michael Rose
KD9TIO – Gary Emmons
K9FRO – Jeffrey Erdman*



Skywarn Spotter Training - Johnson County

When ---Thursday, April 13, 6pm – 8pm

Where --- Johnson County Sheriffs Training Center - 1061 Hospital Rd., Franklin, IN 46131

Description --- Public Spotter Training --- **No preregistration required**

Frequently Asked Questions about Spotter Training Sessions

1. Do I need to preregister for these sessions? **Most of the time, no. All you need to do is arrive at the proper time and location** However, in rare instances, a county might request registration with their officials. Check the details of the session to see if preregistration is required.
2. About how long do the sessions last? **Approximately 2 hours.**
3. Do I have to live / be a spotter in the county that I take the training session? **No. The training sessions are identical.**
4. Is there a fee to attend? **There is no fee to attend.**

March 2023

My Heath Kit HW-8 Prodigal Journey by Art WB9CHR

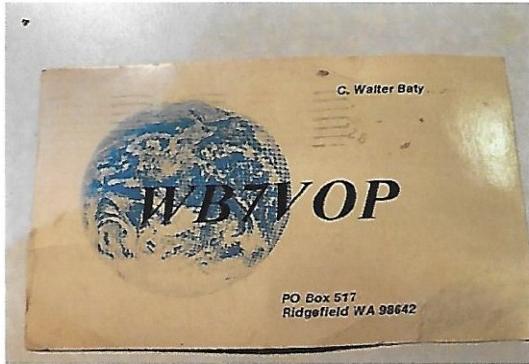
I grew up as a novice in 1969 in La Porte, IN and my dad, K9ZUV (SK) and I shared our love for ham radio and our radios of choice were old Motorolas and Heath kits. Benton Harbor, Michigan was less than a half hour drive from our QTH and the inexpensive cost of kit building offered practical learning and Father & Son bonding experience. Many hours were spent on our dining room table, learning Morse Code and hovering over a make shift square of Formica surrounded by corrugated sloping cardboard edges that staged resistors, capacitors, diodes, chokes and semiconductors. Cupcake trays filled with hardware, knobs and tube sockets and other containers for unnamed "thing-a-ma-jigs." A Small but bright Tensor reading lamp illuminated our work space and the smell of rosin core solder permeated the air. Those were the days. Thus became my pattern for kit building and my continued love for Heath kits.

The HW-8 Heath kit CW QRP transceiver was purchased and built in 1978 after I married and moved to Indianapolis and my realization was that apartment living limited my antenna capabilities. I learned to move into a top floor apartment that had an attic access where I could string up my dipoles and the HW-8 became my HF radio of choice. I built a surrounding plywood cabinet to hold wire antennas, connectors, a key and headphones as well as pencils and copy paper. The HW-8 came with a power supply and connectors for 12VDC operation. My cabinet enclosure initially utilized space for swr bridge, but later I added the drawer and my engraved call letters. I sold the HW-8 at a ham fest and realized soon afterwards that I had lost a good friend. That was about 20 years ago.



One of my most cherished contacts was on 15 meters in November, 1980. I was living in a double townhouse near Frye Road in Greenwood and my radio shack was an outside lawn mover closet that had a lightbulb and switch. I would run an extension cord from the light socket to power the HW-8, a space heater and a light. I ran a fifty foot RG-58a coax to an SO-238 connector grounded with an alligator clip to the aluminum gutter and siding on the corner of the house about 10 feet in the air. I used a random length of stranded aerial wire, appx 100 feet toward the neighbor's close line pole that sloped down to 5 feet. The antenna was pointed in a North East slope direction. This arrangement was temporary as the neighbors were the landlords of the property and my operation was as discreet as possible. On 11-21-1980, I contacted Ridgefield, Washington, WB7VOP who reported that he lived 4 miles East of Mount St Helens and was in view of the volcano. I was operating 5 watts CW on 21.082 MHz and he gave me a 5-9-9 report. The volcano had erupted on May 18, 1980 and my contact was made after the eruption, but the volcano was still active.





I made other subsequent QSO's and took the rig to Alabama where I operated mountaintops using a garden tractor battery as power supply. I began to look for another HW-8 and was planning to replicate my cabinet. The HW-8 was out of my life for about 15 years, when suddenly out of the blue I received a call from a ham in Atlanta Georgia. The ham said he had my HW-8 and my call letters were still engraved on the drawer. He stated he purchased the radio at a ham fest at Stone Mountain, Georgia and wanted to know if I wanted the radio. Of course, the timing couldn't have been better and I said "yes." The ham was a native of Indianapolis and was retired from Coca Cola and was coming up that weekend and stated he would bring the radio to me. We met at a near-by Steak and Shake and he gave me my radio back. He also included the original coax cables and high impedance head phones that were original and I had sold with the radio. He wanted no money for it. I bought him lunch and gave him my cherished Amateur radio belt buckle that had a morse key design. The ham's name was Newt and I lost his call letters and emails. He stated that while he was working for Coca Cola, he had a part in inventing the patent for Coke Zero. He was drinking Coke Zero at the near-by Steak and Shake. The radio still functions and had some transmitter drifting. I was able to disassemble it and found that the variable tuner had separated and was easily rectified by snapping the wafer back into place. The drift is less noticeable now and as the unit warms up it seems to maintain its frequency. It operates at 15, 20, 40 and 75 meters CW with five watts maximum. I listen mostly and enjoy having my prodigal son return to my collection. Now that I have better end fed antennas, and as I am getting back into CW, I will renew my QRP contacts with my good old friend from my past.

73's Artb

Anyone Can Learn CW!??

By Gordon Brock, KD9RUE

This is Gordon, KD9RUE, your CW correspondent in the trenches of the live battlefield of learning CW. Yes, that's right, fresh out of Ham licensing Boot Camp and now in the front lines of learning CW. I am a private, still wet behind my ears in the amateur hobby. I joined this CW fight because of the encouragement of all the veterans who have already fought this war years before. Their endless patriotic parade of "anyone can learn CW" to "real Ham operators use CW". There are none more passionate about a specific ham mode than CW operators. So sure, I signed up for a battle that sounded like an easy win. After all, 'anyone can learn CW' as all these veterans did. Right?

By the way, this is the second time I have been in this trench. The first time I surrendered and walked away. Here I am, a year later, in the same trench fighting the same battle. However, this time I am armed with a lot more information and better training than I started with the first time. Zeal and enthusiasm will get you only so far. At the end of the day, or the end of this battle, victory will only be achieved with the right weapons (knowledge) used in the right way. The patriotic parade of 'just do it' from a chorus of operators that learned CW 20 or 30 years ago and who were 20-30 years younger than I am now, just does not win battles. So, I am writing to you from the foxhole and the front lines of this battle. I cannot say for sure if I will win this time or not. All I can share is what I have learned from my past failures and a few small victories in the current fight.

"To yourself be true" from Hamlet is the best advice I can give any Ham seeking to join me in the CW battle. Every soldier is different in how the good Lord wired them. Back in the day, the education system taught one way to everyone... Wrote memory. CW teaching has never evolved from that single model. Most CW courses vary very little from a single education model and do not take into consideration individual learning styles, learning handicaps and student aptitudes. The current courses hands new recruits a muzzle loader and expects them to win the CW war because that is how they won the war back in their day. I know one thing for sure, if I am going to win this war, I am going to have to know my own learning style's strengths and weaknesses and adapt the many programs out there to fit my learning style and not depend on the singular learning model most use.

The best example of this is found from many who will demand you learn CW by head copy only, i.e.: do not write down the code, but 'see it in your head'. I tried that method and died an early death. My learning style does not 'see things in my head'. To make this point, I recorded a test where I said some English letters, one at a time, just like code, at 20 words per minute. Then I played it for others to determine if they were capable of head copy. The test was with English letters that they have known all their life and they know every letter they hear. However, some were unable to process the entire sentence in their head because that is not how they are wired. Neither good nor bad, just how their mind works. I made the test and still am unable to 'see it in my head' because I am just not wired that way. I am a visual learner. I equate learning code by head copy to those who can hear music and repeat it on a piano. It is a unique gift and ability. But we don't all have it. First and foremost, I had to be true to my own learning style and because of this, I am further along today than I was at this time last year.

In all my studies to fight this battle, I have discovered there are only two agreed principles:

1. You must learn by Sound.

2. You must develop, in your learning style, Instant Recognition.

Learn by Sound. So, the second time around I have not looked at a dot and dash chart at all. This second round of fighting is by sound only. I also had to understand that when dealing with sound, you have to consider two speeds: a) Character Speed: how fast each individual character speed is played and b) Word Speed: how fast each character follows the other to make a word. Since I am learning by sound, I want the sound of the character to be the same from the very first lesson all the way through my learning. So, I set the Character Speed at 20 wpm. Again, this is the sound of the individual character. I don't want it to change for the entirety of my fight. I then started this battle by putting those characters one after the other at a Word Speed of 5 wpm to start. I have worked up to 8-10 Word Speed over two months of doing it this way. They say that victory is found when the Character speed is at 20 wpm (as it was from the beginning) and the letters coming one after the other, Word Speed, of 20 wpm. Well, that is crazy talk for a rookie in a fox hole! But that is the battle I am fighting now.

Instant Recognition: This is to practice, in my learning style, to recognize the sound of a character and then write it, say it, or type it instantly. By the way, science has proven that saying the character out loud when learning will help in all learning styles. *"In psychology there is a "Law of Contiguity," which says that if two events occur no more than one-half second apart, the mind associates the two events. This means when a Morse code character is heard and it is followed within one half second by a spoken letter of the alphabet, the mind will associate the Morse sound with the translation. The association works automatically, as a workman thinks "lunch" when he hears the noon whistle blow. But we quickly forget things learned by this association method, so we need to "overlearn" them to make the code a part of our permanent memory"*¹.

Adaptation: With the two agreed on 'principles', you would expect the teaching to follow accordingly, and that all methods to learn CW would be by sound. What I found in all the teaching methods was to start with the easiest characters first, regardless of sound, and work up to the harder ones. First, this has nothing to do with the sounds of the characters. Second, it is based on length or ease of learning simple characters first. What it means is that after two months of practice I would have repeated the easiest characters a billion times and the harder characters only a few hundred. But hey, that is how they did it back in the day.

So, I had to adapt to my learning style. I invented what I call "sound groups". Since there are groups of letters that start with or end with similar sounds, I developed groups of letters around those sounds and worked on instant recognition among these sound groups. It did two things for me: a) helped me to hear the like sounds and b) separate sounds from characters that had similar sounds. This has helped a great deal with instant recognition. Again, I had to adapt to learn using the two agreed on principles. I have found a great article on the "five sounds of morse code". It will only take one time through the code alphabet to find the sound of the dot's change from character to character based on how many dots are chained together and where they come from in order. *"When you teach yourself to hear the five distinct sounds of the code all you must do is listen."*

- H becomes 'didy didit'
- S becomes 'didy dit'
- 5 becomes 'didy didy dit'

¹ Instant Recognition; A Better Method Of Building Morse Code Speed: Originally written by Nancy Kott / WZ8C

*It is much easier to hear 'didy didy dit' than it is to count five 'di' sounds. The differences between these similar characters becomes much easier to hear*².

This battle has been raging for two months now and the outcome is far from clear. However, this second time around, I am more equipped than before, and I am not ham strung by outdated learning methods. This allows for adaptation and hopefully a victory out of this CW fox hole. My hope is that sharing my struggles will help other soldiers out there, who are wired like me and fighting a similar battle to find victory!

² The Five Sounds Of International Morse Code; By Mike Scott on 03/05/2014; <https://www.sparc-club.org/the-five-sounds-of-morse-code/>

BUY, SELL OR TRADE

I have a free 50 watt Kenwood dual bander to give away. Its receiver has been damaged by a storm and needs a strong signal to get quieting. The transmitter, however, seems OK and could be used to supplement a handheld for more range. Comes with the mic, programming cable and manual.

Thanks. Contact Ron at 463-207-8698. or viking9321@gmail.com

CLUB DUES FOR 2023

It is that time of year for your membership dues for the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club. The annual membership dues is \$25.00 per year and has not changed from last year.

Please check out the M.A.R.C. website and you may pay your dues via PayPal. This also a good time to update any of your information for club records such as license upgrade, change of address, contact information or call sign.

This is also a good opportunity for new amateurs to join our club and join in our club activities for 2023.

Please see Jacki Frederick, KI6QOG M.A.R.C. Treasurer

38th Annual Columbus



Sponsored by Columbus Amateur Radio Club

**Saturday, April 1, 2023
8:00 a.m. to Noon**

Adult General Admission \$5.00

**North High School Cafeteria
1400 25th Street | Columbus, IN 47201**

New Location!

**Vending
Machines
Available**

**Free
Parking**

Flea Market Space Available

\$10 per 8 foot table: fee includes table(s)
Set-up 6 a.m. Saturday, 4/1. Registration will be conducted at the door or in advance.

For registrations or more info, contact:
Mike Idlewine WE9MI
4373 E. Windsor Lane | Columbus, IN 47201

All-Indoor
Flea
Market

Please enclose SASE with advance exhibitor registration or advance general admission. Advance registrations must be prepaid and postmarked by March 17, 2023. Make checks payable to: Columbus Amateur Radio Club

VE TESTING: 9- 11 a.m.

Provided by SCICSG representing Laurel VEC, providing free VE testing since 1984.

Pre-Register at least 24 hours in advance by email:
Mike Tanksley W9MDT
w9mdt@arrl.net | 812-350-5175

Those with passing test scores will be entered into a drawing for \$100 DX Engineering gift certificate

Hourly Door Prizes!

Grand Prize is a ICOM 2730A Dual Band Mobile
(Cash awarded to non-amateur winner)



Columbus HAMFEST

Saturday, April 1, 2023 | 8:00 a.m. to Noon

**Columbus North High School Cafeteria
1400 25th Street | Columbus, IN 47201**

Columbus Amateur Radio Club

Mike Idlewine
4373 E. Windsor L
Columbus, IN 47201



Tune in to Columbus Amateur Radio Club

Hamfest Talk-in 146.79 MHz (-600 kHz, PL 103.5 Hz)

<http://www.carcnet.net> | Facebook: Columbus Amateur Radio Club Hamfest



MID-STATE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets the THIRD SATURDAY of each month at the Johnson County REMC building 750 International Dr. Franklin, IN 46131

See our website, www.midstatehams.org, for maps on how to get to our meeting.

Everyone is welcome; you do not have to be a *HAM* to attend our meetings or a member of the club.

W9MID Repeater:

146.835/
146.235 MHz
(151.4 Hz PL Tone)

Club Officers:

President: Tim Aldridge - WC9G
Vice President: Rhonda Curtis - WS9H
Secretary: Jim Adams – KB9JMU
Treasurer: Jacki Frederick - KI6QOG
Repeater Trustee: Chris Frederick – KQ9Y
Club Historian: Jack Parker – W8ISH
Club P.I.O. : Jim Williams – N9EJR

W9MID Repeater:

443.525/
448.525 MHz
(151.4 Hz PL Tone) YEASU SYSTEM FUSION (C4FM)

Weekly Net: Sunday evening 7:00 PM ARES/RACES members and **ALL RADIO AMATEURS**
146.835/146.235 MHz (151.4 Hz PL Tone)

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P.O. Box 836
Franklin, Indiana
46131
Spark Gap Editor: Robert LaGrange N9SIU

Please send your articles to my email: n9siu@yahoo.com no later than the 3rd week of the month.



Thanks to Johnson Co. REMC for the use of their building for meetings and testing.

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